

COMMISSION NEWS

New Arrivals to the HRC Team



C. Joan Parker: Administrative Law Judge. Judge Parker is a graduate of Davis & Elkins College and the Georgetown University Law Center. She previously worked with Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, WV Supreme Court Administrative Office, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, WV Ethics Commission, and Kanawha County Public Defender Services. Joan brings extensive human rights experience to the HRC because she worked for over a decade litigating discrimination cases on behalf of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. Joan is also an accomplished musician who sings with the WV Symphony Chorus.



Hazra Alladin: Administrative Services Assistant. Ms. Alladin is a graduate of Mountain State University with a Master of Science in Strategic Leadership. Ms. Alladin previously worked in several roles at the WV Department of Education, and she also worked at Workforce WV and the WV Tax Department. Hazra is originally from Trinidad and Tobago and is the mother of one son and aunt to several nieces and nephews. In her spare time, Hazra enjoys gardening.



Joseph A. Saunders: Investigator Associate. Mr. Saunders holds degrees from Vincennes University, West Virginia State University, and Marshall University Graduate College. He also has certifications from the WV State Police Academy, WV Corrections Academy, and for Firefighter 1 & 2 plus Hazardous Materials Operations. Joe has worked as a paralegal for the WV Insurance Commission and served for 26 years as the Chief of Police at WV State University. Joe sees his job at the HRC as an opportunity to continue serving as a “crusader of justice,” in keeping with the teachings of his mentors.

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Judge Gregory Evers’ Retirement

On December 31, 2021, Administrative Law Judge Gregory Evers retired from the West Virginia Human Rights Commission after more than seven years with the Commission, and over 20 years as a public servant for the State of West Virginia. Judge Evers was a valiant proponent of human rights and worked tirelessly to ensure that the civil and human rights of West Virginians were not illegally violated. On his final day at the commission, Judge Evers left us with some wisdom that we would like to pass along.

"Things are tough out there. Biases will always exist. Do everything you can to help the people of WV, because they need it. It's out there, you have to do the best you can to help them... We're the only place that people can go sometimes. Don't give up, please don't give up. Because these people really need it."

Judge Evers brought that same fighting spirit to the Commission every day, and those of us who know and worked with him, cannot express enough gratitude for our time with him. Senior Deputy Attorney General Bob Leslie, who worked closely with Judge Evers, had this to say: “Judge Evers was a dedicated and talented judge. I knew going into every appearance and hearing that he had read the materials submitted by both sides, given the presented issues independent thought, and his ruling would follow the letter and spirit of the law.” His long-time paralegal, Rebecca Lester, added, “It was a delight working so closely with Judge Evers over the past seven-plus years. His passion for the law, specifically pertaining to human and civil rights, was inspiring to witness. We miss him but wish him nothing but the best in retirement.”

Please join us in wishing Judge Evers a wonderful retirement and the best of luck in whatever he chooses to do going forward, along with thanking him for his dedicated service to protecting the rights of West Virginians.

Correction: *In our last edition, we mistakenly titled an article “First African American WV State Senator.” This piece was referring to Owens Brown, who recently became the first African American **man** on the West Virginia State Senate, but not the first African American person. That honor went to Marie Redd in 1998, when she defeated the incumbent Thomas F. Scott, winning the 5th District, containing Cabell County and a small portion of Wayne County. Redd also became the first female senator from Cabell County at that time.*

SAME WORK, EQUAL PAY INITIATIVE

The West Virginia Human Rights Commission is excited to announce a new engagement initiative that is funding, in cooperation with the US EEOC, the "Same Work, Equal Pay Initiative." The WVHRC is accepting applications from staff and students 14-21 years old residing, working, or going to school in the West Virginia counties of Cabell, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, Mercer, McDowell, and Raleigh.

This is a grassroots initiative intended to educate and inform local youth prior to entering the workforce, pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors, and/or community service projects. The awarded grants will be available to applicants to hold seminars, workshops, and/or career days (virtual or in-person) to promote gender pay equity. The initiative will give local youth access to speakers and content to learn about gender pay equity, employment laws, civil rights, and human rights. The initiative will also ensure local youth know who to contact when their rights have been violated and the process of filing a complaint.

If you or someone you know would like to enter an application, please email Donnie Staats (Donald.W.Staats@wv.gov) or Hazra Alladin (Hazra.Alladin@wv.gov) The application period will run through 12/31/2022. Completed applications can be mailed to the West Virginia Human Rights Commission at 1321 Plaza East Room 108A, Charleston, WV 25301, Attn. Hazra or Donnie, or sent to Donald.W.Staats@wv.gov or Hazra.Alladin@wv.gov.

Recognition



Congratulations to Kayla Craig for being recognized as the WVHRC February Employee of the Month! Ms. Craig not only performs her duties as docketing clerk exceptionally well, but she also always manages to generously lend a helping hand to her co-workers on any project, big or small. The WVHRC would like to thank Ms. Craig for all of her hard work and dedication.

HIGHLIGHTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS HISTORY

On June 17, 1873, the trial *United States v. Susan B. Anthony* was held. Anthony, a prominent leader in the women's suffrage movement, had been arrested for voting in the 1872 presidential election. Though the specific law prohibiting her vote was a New York state law, the case was held in federal court because the Enforcement Act of 1870 made violating state voting laws a federal crime. Because of this, Supreme Court Justice Ward Hunt served as the judge despite having never acted as a trial judge before.

Her lawyer made the case that she was a citizen of the United States and should thus be able to participate in its governance. U.S. Attorney Richard Crowley rebutted with the argument that children are also considered citizens, and affirmed that contemporary voting laws specifically protected the voting rights of men. Hunt, meanwhile, barred Anthony from testifying on her own behalf or even speaking during the trial, and on the second day ruled in the prosecution's favor, directing the jury to find her guilty.

After the trial's conclusion, Anthony proceeded to deliver what historian Ann D. Gordon called "the most famous speech in the history of the agitation for woman suffrage," despite repeated attempts by the judge to silence her. She declared the trial inherently unfair, as no element of the political system considered her a peer to her opposition, and reminded the audience that this system had also protected the institution of slavery within her own lifetime. Though the trial did not end in her favor, it did give her cause widespread public attention, and ultimately became an iconic moment in the history of women's rights. *Source: Wikipedia.*

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Commission, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has continued work on various outreach and education initiatives to raise awareness in our communities about Fair Housing rights in West Virginia. Over the last few months, the HRC has run a print campaign in West Virginia Executive Magazine, started a one-year campaign on the Jumbotron at Laidley Field, contacted local businesses regarding hanging informational flyers, and reached out to grassroots, faith-based, and other community-based organizations regarding partnering to distribute these informational materials, and hosted fair housing education seminars.

Recently, our staff have had the opportunity to participate at the capitol with an information booth to share information; below are HRC's Hazra, Jeff, Joe, and Tiffany on the scene.



ADVERTISING HUMAN RIGHTS

The West Virginia Human Rights Commission has been spreading the word through traditional advertising, though in two very different mediums.

In March 2022, the HRC had a thirty-second public service announcement radio campaign on 98.7 (in the Charleston area); the PSA was dedicated to spreading awareness of the HRC among West Virginians and giving them the means to act against discrimination. The HRC also had a thirty-second PSA on WVRC Media in the Charleston, Morgantown, and Beckley areas. This segment was to advertise the annual Fair Housing Conference that was held virtually on April 29 as a part of Fair Housing Month.

Additionally, the HRC's Housing Division has implemented an outdoor billboard advertising campaign to bring awareness to unfair housing practices and to provide the public with information on how to contact the Commission. The advertisements were placed on billboards in Charleston, Huntington, Morgantown, and Parkersburg, and will be on display through the months of April and May.

WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY AND WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

To honor Women's History Month and West Virginia history, the HRC encourages taking a moment to reflect on the legacy of labor rights activist Mother Jones.

Mother Jones was born Mary Harris in Cork County, Ireland, and escaped the Great Famine in Ireland, immigrating with her family to Canada when she was 10 years old. Throughout her childhood in Canada and adult life in the US, she and her family faced discrimination for being immigrants, Catholic, and Irish. Mary Harris moved to Michigan and later Memphis, Tennessee, where she met and married her husband, George Jones, a staunch unionist. In 1867, Jones lost her husband and their four children, all under the age of 5, to the Yellow Fever epidemic. It was then that Mother Jones began traveling the country and organizing labor unions and strikes, especially among coal miners (AFL-CIO).

Mother Jones, seeing the condition of child miners, many of whom were missing fingers or otherwise disabled, organized a march in 1903 from Philadelphia to Oyster Bay, New York, the hometown of President Theodore Roosevelt. She attempted to get newspapers to cover the plight of the exploited children, but many mill owners held stock in most newspapers. She was informed that they would not cover the stories, and remarked, "Well, I've got stock in these little children, and I'll arrange a little publicity." She requested and was denied a meeting with the president, who also refused to meet with the marchers, but the issue of child labor practices was brought to the forefront of the public agenda.

Jones became heavily involved in the labor movement among Appalachian coal miners and traveled to West Virginia during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike in 1912. The strike began in April of that year, and Jones arrived in June after the coal companies hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency and began evicting workers, bringing in replacements, and participating in beatings, sniper attacks, and sabotage upon the miners. Mother Jones spoke and organized alongside the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), despite an ongoing shooting war, and martial law was declared twice during her time in West Virginia. She was arrested on February 13, 1913, and was tried before a military court on charges of conspiracy to commit murder. Jones was sentenced to twenty years in the state penitentiary but was released after 85 days of home confinement.



Mother Jones Magazine

She remained active in labor rights activism for decades, organizing with UMWA and fighting for the rights of coal miners and was consistently vocal in her disdain for the exploitation of West Virginians by coal barons and politicians. In August 1921, she intervened on behalf of a miners' march into Mingo County, speaking to the Governor in hopes of stopping the armed march. Throughout her activism she also advocated for racial equality within the working class and emphasized and supported class and race intersectionality.

Mary Harris Jones passed away in Silver Spring (now Adelphi), Maryland on November 30, 1930. She was laid to rest in the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive, Illinois. Her legacy continues to influence activists today, especially in Appalachia. A woman who was once dubbed "the most dangerous woman in America," Mother Jones laid a foundation for working class solidarity, labor rights, class and race intersectionality, and radical union organizing that gave many workers the freedoms and protections they enjoy today.

Source: Wikipedia.

MORE NOTABLE WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY

May 3, 1960: The Diamond Department Store in Charleston opened its dining facilities to African Americans.

May 12, 1914: In *Jameson v. Board of Education, District of Union*, the West Virginia Supreme Court ruled that marriage was not grounds for removal of a woman teacher from her position.

June 7, 1895: Elizabeth Kee, the first woman to be elected to the United States Congress from West Virginia, was born.

June 12, 1968: Renowned African American scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. graduated as valedictorian of his Piedmont High School class.

PROTECTION

This type of word puzzle is a “cipher” or “cryptogram.” Ciphers use symbols or other letters to represent the alphabet, sometimes in a solvable pattern! This cipher uses a pattern to change the letters out for other letters. Use the clues to find the hidden words! You can the boxes to fill in letters you’ve already solved.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

R	-	-	E
Y	H	J	L

R	E	-	-	-	N		
Y	L	S	P	N	P	V	U

-	-	-	-	-	-
N	L	U	K	L	Y

-	-	-	-	-
J	V	S	V	Y

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
U	H	A	P	V	U	H	S	P	A	F

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
K	P	Z	H	I	P	S	P	A	F

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
M	H	T	P	S	P	H	S	Z	A	H	A	B	Z

June 30th is National Meteor Watch Day!



Though shooting stars aren’t any more common on this day, a clear night in early summer is perfect for sitting outside and watching the sky. You may have heard the terms meteor and meteorite used interchangeably, but there is a difference: a meteor is an object that enters Earth’s atmosphere from space, and if it lands rather than burning up on the way down, it becomes a meteorite.



WHAT WE DO

The WV Human Rights Commission provides outreach and education to residents of WV on Fair Housing, Equal Employment and Public Accommodations through annual training conferences and seminars. The commission is available to provide training in-person and virtually by request.

The Commission can assist residents by providing documents to file a complaint of discrimination with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission. Once a citizen files a complaint, the HRC will investigate claims for cause findings. If a complainant has a probable cause finding, the Commission will provide an attorney through the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division free of charge.

CONTACT HRC

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